December 16, 2009

We live in an age of advanced technology, where folks here in Georgia can be connected to folks across the world simply by logging on to the Internet.   However, with this incredible access comes increased securrity risks.

Many people have P2P software on their personal computers for file sharing, and they're unaware that when they connect to these networks their personal files on their comptuer are available to anyone else on the network.

Folks are posting their passwords, tax returns, personal messages, and financial records - and they don't even know it.

P2P software has been implicated in several recent, high-profile security breaches. In one case, documents detailing the President's helicopter, Marine One, were found on a computer in Iran.   In another, a congressional aide inadvertently leaked a confidential document about investigations into several members of Congress.

In each case, P2P software was found to have been the culprit.

That's why I introduced H.R. 1319, the Informed P2P User Act, with my colleagues, Congresswoman Bono Mack (CA-45) and Congressman Joe Barton (TX-6). he bill, which passed the House on December 8, addresses the security risk of P2P file sharing networks by making users aware of these risks before they log on.

Specifically, the Informed P2P User Act:

   - Ensures   that P2P file sharing programs cannot be installed without providing clear notice and obtaining informed consent of the authorized computer user.

   - Makes   it unlawful to prevent the authorized user of a computer from:

   -
   - Blocking   the installation of a peer-to-peer file sharing program, or

-
- Disabling   or removing any peer-to-peer file sharing program.

- Gives   enforcement authority to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC).

   I hope the Senate moves quickly to pass the Informed P2P User Act. The security risks associated with P2P file sharing aren't just a concern for folks worried about their personal files - it's become an issue of national security.

I hope folks will also take a few moments to speak with your kids about using P2P file sharing programs.